

What Does This Mean? The Continuing Importance of Luther's Small Catechism



Lesson 4. The Lord's Prayer. What Does the Catechism Mean for Our Personal and Daily Relationship With God?

Prayer and Introduction

The diagnosis is clear. The Ten Commandments tell us that we are sinners and cannot make ourselves right for God. We can ignore the diagnosis, but we can't change it. The Creed gives us the remedy. Christ has shown us the deep love God has for us sinners; he has given us forgiveness as the cure for sin. We have hope; God loves us.

What is our life to be like after we know both the diagnosis and the cure? Jesus directs us to pray and gives us a simple but profound prayer we call the Lord's Prayer.

1. We have everything from God: forgiveness, eternal life and salvation. God also knows what we need each day. Then why do we still need to pray? Each of the passages below can help you answer the question. (If you are working as a group, divide into groups and assign one passage to each group. Read and discuss the passage and prepare a reason why we should pray based on the passage. Then each group should share their reactions with the entire group.)

- a. Romans 7:14-25.
- b. Mark 9:17-24
- c. 1 Peter 5:6-10
- d. 1 John 2:15-16
- e. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

2. From the passages you reviewed, describe what it means to be a Christian in this world.

3. The Lord's Prayer carries the real human needs of Christians living in an imperfect world to God in prayer. With each petition we want to explore those human needs.

a. The First petition asks "Hallowed by your name."

What have you seen or experienced that has disgraced or dishonored God?

What do you wish would happen in this world and in your life to see God honored and respected?

b. The Second Petition asks "Your kingdom come." What have you seen or experienced that in your opinion has threatened or prevented the spread of the gospel and the growth of the Lord's church?

c. The Third Petition asks, "Your will be done."

1. When did you question God's activity in our world or society?

2. When have you grown impatient for God to act? Give some specific details.

d. The Fourth Petition asks for "daily bread." Suggest two reasons why we should pray for daily bread.

1)

2)

e. The Fifth Petition asks, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." Give one reason why this petition is important

1. In the workplace

2. At home with family and spouse

3. In the church

From your own experience can you explain why forgiving others is one of the most difficult things Jesus asks us to do?

What can help us be more forgiving?

f. The Sixth Petition asks, "Lead us not into temptation." We live in an imperfect world surrounded by ideas and attitudes different from our Christian views. We face trials every day. We cannot escape them or isolate ourselves completely from them.

List five of the ideas we face regularly that are different from our views or the life Jesus asks us to live.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Explain how these things can lead us to false belief, despair, and shame.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

g. The Seventh Petition is the last request and asks, “Deliver us from evil.” Identify the ultimate goal and end of your journey through life. Briefly go over your journey toward this goal and give three reasons why this petition is important to repeat often.

1)

2)

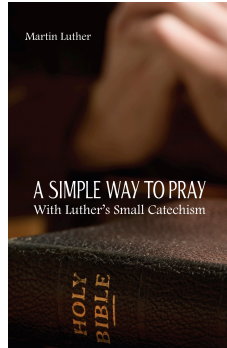
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h. Explain why “Amen” is a confident conclusion to your prayer.

4. Review: Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

5. Taking it Home: Print out the Lord's Prayer and add some of the things you identified in the exercises for each of the petitions. They should help you remember the things for which you pray.

Additional Reading: *A Simple Way to Pray* (Martin Luther)



A Simple Way to Pray Ministry

Version 0600751 \$2.99

A Simple Way to Pray With Luther's Small

Catechism 0600752 \$4.99

(ebook editions also available for both)

See NPH.com

Although we have and believe God's Word, and do and submit to his will, and are supported by his gifts and blessings, our life is still not sinless. We still stumble daily and transgress because we live in the world. (LC 3, 86)

The flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that neither trusts nor believes God. It is ever active in evil lusts and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed by what do and fail to do. (LC 3, 89)

So every hour that we are in this vile life, we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down. We are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not allow us to become weary and faint and to fall again into sin, shame, and unbelief (LC 3, 105)

Grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured because of your Word and kingdom, so that our poor flesh may not yield or fall away because of weakness or sluggishness (LC 3, 67)

Christians should pray whenever they notice anything affecting their interests or that of other people among whom they may live (LC 3, 28)

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name.**

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Your Kingdom come

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Your will be done

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Give us today our daily bread

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Lead us not into temptation

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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Deliver us from evil

Needs I See or Experience	My Prayer
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For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Additional Needs to include in my prayers:

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